



Americans for Democratic Action

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Where it's more than just politics. It's about taking a stand.

July 23, 2001

The Honorable John D. Dingell
House Committee on Energy and Commerce
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-6115

Dear Congressman Dingell:

Americans for Democratic Action (ADA), the nation's preeminent liberal political organization, stands strongly in support of the Ganske-Dingell-Norwood Bipartisan Patient Protection Act of 2001, HR 2563. This extremely popular, long overdue legislation is the only strong, enforceable patients' bill of rights currently being considered by Congress.

We strongly urge the House to repeat their stunning accomplishment of 1999, protecting the best interest of the American people by passing the Dingell-Norwood patients' bill. Unlike that year, stalling by the Senate will not be a roadblock for real patient protection; in a resounding victory for American families, McCain-Edwards-Kennedy passed the Senate last month. Thus, it is up to all Members of the House to stand up to the intense lobbying of the HMOs, and to do right by the American people.

Unlike the HMO-supported Fletcher version of the patients' bill, Ganske-Dingell-Norwood provides a federal floor of guaranteed protections to all Americans with private health insurance. The Fletcher bill does not go nearly far enough in solidifying access to needed care or protecting the right to an independent review and litigation. This legislation would impede the review process with high filing fees, short time frames to file complaints, and unnecessary standards for simply getting a review. Fletcher also weakens patients' rights by allowing state plans, which may not meet federal standards, to displace federal protections. The American people are not blind; they will know if the insurance companies successfully persuaded Congress to act against the best interest of families nationwide.

True patient protection legislation must, as McCain-Edwards-Kennedy did, guarantee access to specialists, to ob-gyn services, and to a speedy and truly independent external review process when care is denied. House passage of HR 2563 is the only option.

Sincerely,

Amy Isaacs

National Director

President Jim Jontz • Executive Committee Chair Bill Markus • Counsel Jack Elum • Treasurer Carol Casey
Secretary Evelyn Jones Rich • Leadership 2000 Chair David Ackerman • President Emeritus Jack Sheinkman
National Director Amy Isaacs